DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 030 855 AL 001 857

By-Mueller, Theodore

Analysis of the Results Obtained with "Basic French--A Programmed Course" Academic Year 1968-69 and Comparison with a Traditional Audio-Lingual Course.

Pub Date [69]
Note-13p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.75
Descriptors-*Audiolingual Methods, Cloze Procedure, Comparative Analysis, *French, *Language Instruction, *Programed Instruction, *Teaching Methods, Testing
Identifiers-Kentucky University

An analysis of the results obtained with "Basic French--A Programmed Course" taught to University of Kentucky freshmen in 1968-69 is presented. These results, which are compared with those of two traditional audiolingual courses, have led to the following conclusions: (1) results of the Programmed Course are significantly superior to national norms (except in reading) and to results obtained in the two audiolingual courses; (2) the Programmed Course retains more students than the audiolingual courses; (3) the Programmed Course benefits particularly the low aptitude students and gives them a chance to fulfill the foreign language requirement; (4) with the Programmed Course the average student can succeed as well as the high aptitude student, if he puts forth the time and effort; (5) the opinion polls taken show an overwhelming acceptance of the Programmed Course; (6) the graduate students who taught the Programmed Couse have generally expressed enthusiasm for it; (7) the Programmed Course permits obtaining superior results by inexperienced instructors; and (8) the results obtained with the Programmed Course do not depend on the language mastery of the instructor. All graduate assistants who taught the Programmed Course were American natives and spoke French from "acceptable" to "good." Half the audiolingual teachers were French. (AMM)

ED030855

ANALYSIS of the RESULTS
obtained with
BASIC FRENCH - A Programmed Course
Academic Year 1968-69
and
COMPARISON with a
Traditional Audio-Lingual Course

Theodore Mueller
University of Kentucky

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

AL 001 857

I. First Semester (French 104)

	Fall '68	Spring '69
Enrolled	144 students	64 students
Withdrawn	11 students-7.5 %	6 students-9.3 %
MLAT mean (Carrol-Sapon)	35 % ile	35 % ile

Grades

	Fall '68				Spring '69			
	Course		Final Exam		Course		Final Exam	
	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%
A	35	27.7	24	19	24	48	11	22
B	34	26.9	31	24.5	19	38	25	50
C	41	32.5	43	34	7	14	8	16
D	16	12.5	12	9.5			5	10
E			16	12.6			1	2
Inc.	7				7			
Audit					1			

1. Final Examination

The final examination consisted of:

1. a "cloze" test in which the student fills in a missing grammatical word which he must deduce from the context and the structure of the sentence. It tests his knowledge of grammar.

2. a grammar test requiring constructed responses, both questions and answers, as replies to French stimuli.

3. a reading test.

2. Grades

The students who received incompletes required more time. They usually had enrolled in too many courses or worked for too many hours at an outside job. The Foreign Language course was slighted since it required more study time than the other courses.

The grade distribution heavily favors the A and B, even more so in the Spring semester 1969. This trend, though, seems to be reflected in the final examination and, later on, in the MLA Cooperative tests.

In the Fall 1968, 117 out of 144 students, or 81 % succeeded while in the Spring 1969, 58 students out of 64, or 90 %, succeeded, that is received a C or better and will succeed in the subsequent course. These results are so much more noteworthy when the low aptitude of these classes (35 % ile) is taken into consideration.

3. Interpretation

	Withdrawn	Failures (D-E)	MLAT percentiles
Fall '67	15. %	25 %	51
Spring '68	24.8 %	11 %	40
Fall '68	7.5 %	12.5 %	35
Spring '69	9.3 %	none	35

a. The mean aptitude (measured by MLAT) decreased sharply from 1967 to 1968-69, due to a ruling which went into effect in 1968 requiring that all students who had had two years of high school French or more take the third semester or a special second semester course instituted for their particular needs. Students who are linguistically more gifted than their colleagues tend to take a Foreign Language in high school as part of their college preparatory work. Students who do not take a Foreign Language are usually aware of their lack of aptitude, some having tried such a course for a semester.

b. If withdrawals and failures are combined and compared, a steady decrease is noticeable (from 40 per cent to ca. 10 per cent). It is another measure indicating better results and thus corroborates the grades that have been given.

c. The following changes were made in the course and are considered responsible for the improved results:

1. ACCESS, that is the process of printing the answers to each stimulus in invisible ink to be revealed after the student

has made his response, thus providing the student immediate feedback about his response, was introduced in the Spring of 1968.

2. Writing was increasingly emphasized and the "speaking-writing" sequence was eventually changed to a "writing-speaking" sequence for the student's homework.

3. The cognitive aspect of the language rules or patterning received increasingly greater emphasis. On the theory that language is "rule-governed behavior", rather than "behavior", the "basic sentence patterns" or the rules of the language were much more thoroughly explained. In the exercises the student was much more frequently referred to these basic sentence patterns.

The changes described above were prompted by my observations of D and E students who were asked to do their homework in my office and under my supervision. It became evident that failure to perceive the patterns to be learned was their principal failure.

II. 2nd Semester (French 105 and 106)

	Fall '68	Spring '69
Enrolled 105	174 students	93 students
106		38 students
Withdrawn 105	12 students-6.8 %	5 students 8.3 %
106		6 students

Grades

	Fall '68		Spring '69	
	Students	Percentages	Students	Percentages
A	32	20.5	44	39.2
B	50	32.	30	25.4
C	58	37.9	27	22.8
D	10	6.4	13	11.1
E	6	3.8	2	1.7
Inc.	6		2	
Audit			2	

1. Class composition

The students in second semester consisted of two groups:

a. Students who had their first semester at UK the previous semester (course labeled French 105).--48 students, Fall '68; and 93 students, Spring '69.

b. Students who had two years of French in high school and because of the results of the placement test could not be placed into the third semester (course labeled French 106). Students are placed into third semester if they score at the 50 percentile level or better on the MLA Cooperative test, form LA, in the Listening and Reading tests.--110 students, Fall '68; and 38 students, Spring '69. The remaining students in the Fall semester '68 have had prior training elsewhere (community colleges, other institutions) or at UK but more than a semester earlier.

2. Grades

In the Fall semester 83.9 per cent of the original enrollement and in the Spring semester, 80 per cent of the original enrollment succeeded, that is made a C or better in the course.

MLA Cooperative Tests
105-106 Combined

	Fall '68			Spring '69		
	Mean Score	Stand. Deviation	% ile	Mean Score	Stand. Deviation	% ile
List.	27.2	7.3	71	24.5	6.2	69
Read.	29.33	8.24	50	28.8	8.4	50
Write.	62.59	18.24	73	64.5	20.66	73
		105 - No H.S. French				
List.	25.77	has not	69	23.15	5.72	60
Read.	25.64	been	38	28.2	8.8	43
Write.	58.19	computed	67	61.1	22.18	67
		106 - with 2 yrs. H.S. French				
List.	27.83	has not	71	29	5.33	77
Read.	30.85	been	58	31.08	8.14	58
Write.	64.19	computed	73	74.4	10.45	93

Distribution of Scores (Percentages)

Percentile Range	Listening		Reading		Writing	
	Fall '68	Spring '69	Fall '68	Spring '69	Fall '68	Spring '69
80-100	31	18.4	16.2	14.2	43.5	56.5
60-79	45	26.3	22.	21.2	20.7	13.
40-59	16	39.3	22.	23.	20.	14.7
25-39	5	9.6	24.	20.4	10.	6.
1-24	1	6.1	14.	21.2	6.	10.4

3. MLA Cooperative Tests.

The results in both the Listening and the Writing tests in the Fall and the Spring semesters are significantly superior to those obtained nationally and published in the Booklet of Norms at or beyond the 1 per cent level of probability. The results obtained in the Reading test are similar to those obtained nationally.

A comparison of the results obtained by those who had two years of High School French (Fr. 106) with those who had none in High School but had one semester at UK (Fr. 105) reveals that the students with previous H.S. French has superior results over the others in all three tests, significant at the 1 per cent level. Most likely this is due to three factors:

a. Time: In four months less language is acquired than in a two year period, even though the High School work is less intensive. This affects particularly vocabulary knowledge, which is stressed in High School, and thus facilitates listening and reading.

b. Aptitude: Students who did not take a foreign language in High School (Fr. 105) were subconsciously aware of their low linguistic aptitude -- as shown in the MLAT Mean of 35th percentile in Fr. 104. On the other hand, the high entrance requirements for the third semester placed many able students into the special second semester course (Fr. 106).

c. Prior learning: The entrance requirements for third semester is responsible for many entering the second semester with a knowledge of French equal to what some achieve when they complete the same course.

Comparing the Spring semester with the Fall semester reveals that the results in the Listening test were significantly inferior -- at the 1 per cent level -- and can be explained by the following

observations:

a. The mix of students is significantly different: 2/3 had two years of High School French in the Fall, but only 1/3 had the same in the Spring.

b. In the Spring semester, by their own admission in the opinion poll, the lab attendance was drastically reduced:
33 % said to have gone only half the time, while
31 % said not to have gone at all.

The results obtained in the Writing test shows an improvement--a slight improvement for French 105, a drastic improvement for French 106--and can be explained by the following course changes:

a. In the Spring semester, writing was much more emphasized. The traditional "speaking-writing" sequence was changed to a writing-speaking sequence--which may also explain why the attendance in the lab declined.

b. Cognitive-code learning, that is the awareness of the rules or patterns that govern the language, was stressed much more than the previous semester.

4. Comparison of MLA Test results

Test version of Basic French (Fall '67) with the final version (Spring '69):

	Fall '67		Spring '69	
	Mean Scores	%ile	Mean Scores	% ile
List.	21.2	45	24.5	69
Read.	24.2	32	28.8	50
Write.	46.4	50	64.5	73

Comparing the results obtained at the end of the Fall semester 1967, the first year that the test version of the Programmed course had been used, with those in 1969, when the final version of the course was used, reveals a significant improvement in all three measures. This improvement is even more significant when it is noted that the aptitude of the students in Spring '69 was much lower that that of the Fall of '67. The following changes in the final version of the course seem to account for these differences:

a. The use of ACCESS, an invisible ink printing process which permits the student to make his response without seeing the model and then reveals the correct response immediately after. This process effectively implements one of the basic conditions in programmed learning, namely that the student must have instantaneous feedback about his response. It furthermore gives immediate visual feedback or confirmation, rather than limiting the comparison to an aural type model as had been the case with

previous programmed and non-programmed materials.

b. Stressing the Cognitive-Code learning principles affected both the explanations given in class and the work done in class. The student was made aware of the rules governing language behavior. The pattern drills were replaced by exercises requiring that the student produce a sequence of patterns which made him attend to the meaning of what he had to or wanted to say.

c. Writing received increasing stress and particularly in 1968-69. The students were advised to write out a portion of each drill before doing the work orally, thus changing the skill sequence.

d. Reading was taught in an organized manner -- for the first time. The student was made aware of how to intelligently guess at vocabulary items and was taught to recognize the various basic patterns and word groups of the written language.

III. Results at the end of the Fourth Semester.

How do the students having been taught through a Programmed course succeed in a Second Year course devoted primarily to reading modern literary texts?

Fourth Semester

Results Obtained on the MLA Tests -- All Students.

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mid-Percentile
List.	15.4	4.98	65
Read.	24.3	6.88	68

Results Obtained by students from Programmed Course.

	Mean Score	Mid-Percentile
List.	13.7	60
Read.	21.6	59

The above tables compare the results of students who had their First Year French through the French Program with the total results obtained by the class. The sample that could be identified as coming from the Programmed Course consisted of one third of the students in the Fourth Semester class. The other students had two or three years of High School French prior to entering the Third Semester course.

Compared with their classmates the students having had the Programmed

course in its test version are inferior. However, compared to the national norms they are still above average in both measures. It should furthermore be noted that, having had the test version of the Program, they were not as well prepared as those who will begin their Third Semester course in the Fall '69.

IV. Comparison of Results in the Programmed Course with those in two Traditional Audio-Lingual Courses

MLA Cooperative Tests

	Programmed Course Spring 1969			Traditional Audio-Lingual Courses Spring 1967		
	Mean Score	Stand. Deviation	Mid-percentile	Mean Score	Stand. Deviation	Mid-percentile
List.	24.5	6.2	69	17		37
Read.	28.8	8.4	50	24		32
Write.	64.5	20.7	73	50		50
				Spring 1969		
List.				18.7	7.2	42
Read.				28.0	6.6	43
Write.						56.7[1]

[1]The writing percentile for Spring '69 in the Audio-Lingual course is an average of percentiles for half of the class. The scores were unavailable except in this form.

A. Test Results

The results in the Listening test obtained by the students in the Programmed course are significantly superior to those in the Audio-Lingual courses at or beyond the one percent level. The same can be said about the results in the writing test even though a t test cannot be made because of the unavailability of the scores. The results in reading by the students in the Program are significantly superior over those obtained in 1967 and somewhat better than those obtained by the students in the Audio-Lingual course 1969, though the latter difference is not statistically significant.

2. Distribution of scores, (Spring, 1969)

Percentages

Percentile Range	Programmed Course		Traditional Audio-Lingual	
	Listening	Reading	Listening	Reading
80-100	18.4	14.2	9.3	0
60-79	26.3	21.2	9.3	31.2
40-59	39.3	23.0	31.2	25.0
25-39	9.6	20.4	12.4	28.1
1-24	6.1	21.2	37.2	15.6

The distribution of the results in the listening test shows that most students scored in the upper half of the percentile range for the Programmed Course, but in the lower half for the Audio-Lingual course. The weakness of the Audio-Lingual group is due to innate poor auditory ability, which is characteristic of low aptitude students. Programming the listening skill was able to overcome this handicap for the other group.

The distribution of the results in the reading test shows for the Audio-Lingual group a curve which is similar to the one given in the Booklet of Norms, while the curve for the Programmed course is much flatter.

3. Comparison of Withdrawals

Second Semester Course

	Programmed Course	Traditional A-L Course
Spring '67	no classes	12.3 %
Fall '67	12 %	no classes
Spring '68	5.1 %	no classes
Fall '68	6.8 %	no classes
Spring '69	8.3 %	7.1 %

4. Course Completions at the End of First Year French

1968-1969

	Programmed Course	Traditional A-L Course
Enrolled in 104 Fall, '68	144 students	57 students
Re-enrolled in 105 Spring, '69	93 students	27 students (47.3 %)
Finished 105 Spring, '69	88 students (61.1 %)	25 students (43.3 %)

A 56 % drop-out rate (as in the Audio-Lingual course) for the combined First and Second Semesters in a FL course is not unusual and has been reported from other institutions such as the University of Florida or the University of Akron. Most of these students fail to re-enroll in the second Semester course, and either switch to another language or choose a college which does not require a FL. Their experience with a course which emphasizes the spoken language was frustrating to them because of their "poor auditory ability". A number of studies have shown that anxiety is generated among these students and that for this reason they abandon the course.

The greater ability of the Programmed Course to hold its students over the Audio-Lingual course is significant and is attributed to the fact that the first six weeks of the course are devoted to developping the listening skill primarily.

V. Summary of Opinion Poll--Programmed Courses

After the final examination an opinion poll was given to all students in the various Programmed Courses, consisting of 73 questions to which they replied by scoring an answer sheet. Most questions consisted of bipolar adjectives with five choices in between. For example: interesting A B C D E boring. In other cases the choices were spelled out, such as in the following example:

How would you advise another student who had to take a FL?

A. Take this programmed course.
B. Take another language.
C. Change to a different College.
D. Take a course taught in a more traditional fashion.
E. Other.

The following is a short summary of this poll, and reveals their attitude towards the course (that is,its acceptance or rejection) as well as some other facts:

1. Average time spent studying French outside the 4 class periods:

27 %	less than 3 hrs. a week	=	less than 42 hrs.
26 %	4 - 5 hrs. a week	=	about 63 hrs.
30 %	6 - 7 hrs. a week	=	about 91 hrs.

Average about 5 hrs. of study a week.

2. Half (57 %) think they might use French someday.

3. Half (55 %) consider that knowing a FL is desirable, but not necessary in order to be an educated person.

4. Half (47 %) take French because it is required (this deduced from questionnaire).

5. Over half (62 %) think that all students (aptitude) benefit most from the course, while 28 % thought that the high aptitude students would benefit most.

6. Three-fourths (73 % would advise fellow students to take this course over a traditionally taught course or over another language.

7. As to course preference in relation to all their other courses

19 % considered it their most liked course

35 % considered it a course they liked

22 % gave it a neutral rating

10 % did not care for the course

13 % considered it their most disliked course.

8. The question as to whether the course has changed their attitude towards French people was answered:

23 % said very much

19 % said much

24 % said some

12 % said not much

20 % not at all

9. The majority of students (ca. 69 %) rated their achievement in speaking, understanding, and reading French from moderate to good.

10. The reading selections and the class work received highest approval by the vast majority (70-80 %) as being interesting, informative, amusing, important, and useful.

VI. Conclusion

The above analysis of the results leads to the following conclusions:

1. The results obtained in the Programmed Course are significantly superior to both those in the national norms (except for reading) and to those obtained in two Audio-Lingual courses.

2. The Programmed course retains the students significantly better than an Audio-Lingual course.

3. The Programmed Course benefits particularly the low aptitude students, and, though they cannot perform as well as their more gifted classmates, gives them a chance to fulfill the FL requirement.

4. With the Program the average student can succeed as well as the high aptitude student, if he will put forth the effort and the time.

5. The opinion poll shows an overwhelming acceptance of the Program. Personal experience over a ten year period and with many different types of courses leads me to the conclusion that the programming features are responsible for lessening the student's anxiety when asked to listen to and to respond in the FL.

6. The Graduate Students who taught the course have generally expressed enthusiasm for the Programmed Course. It gives them the opportunity to do things in class (such as discussing cultural aspects) which are more interesting than pattern drills.

7. The Program permits obtaining superior results by inexperienced instructors. Our Teaching Assistants are novices to the profession, it being their first teaching experience. The self-instructional features of the Program allows them to make mistakes while learning the art of teaching without affecting the outcome.

8. The results obtained with the Program do not depend on the language mastery of the instructor, either his pronunciation or his fluency. All Graduate Assistants who taught the Program were American natives and spoke French from acceptable to good. Half the instructors teaching the Audio-Lingual Course in 1968-69 were native in the French language.